UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social
Council

Distr.
LIMITED

E/CN.4/1997/L.67
9 April 1997

Original: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Fifty-third session
Agenda item 9 (b)

PURTHER PROMOTION AND ENCOURAGEMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS, INCLUDING THE QUESTION OF THE PROGRAMME AND METHODS OF WORK OF THE COMMISSION

NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS FOR THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Australia*, Austria, Bangladesh, Cameroon*, Canada, Cape Verde, Croatia*, Cyprus*, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ethiopia, France, Honduras*, India, Latvia*, Madagascar, Mexico, Mongolia*, New Zealand*, Philippines, Portugal*, Romania*, Russian Federation, Slovakia*, South Africa, Tunisia*: draft resolution

1997/... National institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights

The Commission on Human Rights,

Recalling relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and its own relevant resolutions concerning national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights, notably General Assembly resolution 48/134 of 20 December 1993, Commission on Human Rights resolution 1995/50 of 3 March 1995, General Assembly resolution 50/176 of 22 December 1995 and Commission on Human Rights resolution 1996/50 of 19 April 1996,

Welcoming the rapidly growing interest shown worldwide in the creation and strengthening of independent, pluralistic national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights,

---

* In accordance with rule 69, paragraph 3, of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council.

Convinced of the important role such national institutions play in promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms and in developing and enhancing public awareness of those rights and freedoms,

Recognizing that the United Nations has played and should continue to play an important role in assisting the development of national institutions,

Recalling that, in General Assembly resolution 48/134, the Assembly welcomed the Principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights, annexed to that resolution,

Recognizing that it is the prerogative of each State to choose, for the establishment of a national institution, the framework that is best suited to its particular needs and circumstances to ensure that human rights are promoted and protected at the national level in accordance with international human rights standards,

Recalling the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights (A/CONF.157/23), in which was reaffirmed the important and constructive role played by national human rights institutions and their role in remedying human rights violations and in the dissemination of human rights information and education concerning human rights,

Recalling also the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace (A/CONF.177/20), in which Governments were urged to create or strengthen independent national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights, including the human rights of women,

Recalling that, at the World Conference on Human Rights, representatives of national institutions who attended as observers played a positive and constructive role in the deliberations of the Conference,

Welcoming the strengthening of regional cooperation amongst national human rights institutions, including the North and Latin American regional meeting in Mexico in April 1996 and the agreement reached at the first Asia-Pacific Regional Workshop of National Human Rights Institutions, held in Darwin, Australia, in July 1996, to establish an Asia-Pacific Regional Forum of National Human Rights Institutions, open to all regional national institutions established in conformity with the Principles relating to the status of national institutions,

Also welcoming the second European regional meeting of national institutions in Copenhagen in January 1997, which established a coordination

group with the aim of strengthening national institutions in Europe and in countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, and commending the High Commissioner/Centre for Human Rights for supporting the meetings in Darwin and Copenhagen,

Noting with satisfaction the constructive participation of representatives of a number of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights in international seminars and workshops organized or sponsored by the United Nations and its Member States and in other United Nations activities,

Noting the importance of finding an appropriate form of participation by national institutions in relevant United Nations meetings dealing with human rights, and noting that a number of national institutions have for some time taken a constructive part in such meetings as part of the delegations of Member States,

1. Reaffirms the importance of the development of effective, independent, pluralistic national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights in keeping with the Principles relating to the status of national institutions annexed to General Assembly resolution 48/134 of 20 December 1993;

2. Encourages Member States to establish or, where they already exist, to strengthen national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights, as outlined in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action;

3. Welcomes the decisions announced recently by a growing number of States, to establish, or consider establishing, national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights;

4. Encourages all Member States to take appropriate steps to promote the exchange, in particular by national institutions, of information and experience concerning the establishment and operation of national institutions;

5. Emphasizes in this regard the need to disseminate the Principles relating to the status of national institutions as widely as possible, and calls upon the Secretary-General to undertake this task;

6. Reaffirms the role of national institutions, where they exist, as appropriate agencies inter alia for the dissemination of human rights materials and other public information activities, including those of the United Nations;

7. Urges the Secretary-General to continue to give a high priority to requests from Member States for assistance in the establishment and strengthening of national human rights institutions as part of the programme of advisory services and technical assistance in the field of human rights;

8. Commends the recently intensified activities of the High Commissioner/Centre for Human Rights in promoting and strengthening national institutions, including through the work of the Special Adviser to the High Commissioner on National Institutions, Regional Arrangements and Preventative Strategies;

9. Requests the High Commissioner/Centre for Human Rights, with the assistance of national institutions and their Coordinating Committee, to continue to provide technical assistance for States wishing to establish or strengthen their national institutions and to organize training programmes for national institutions which request them;

10. Encourages the High Commissioner/Centre for Human Rights to ensure that appropriate arrangements are made and resources provided from within existing resources to continue and further extend the intensified activities in support of national human rights institutions and invites Governments to contribute additional, earmarked funds to the Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights for this purpose;

11. Requests the Secretary-General to take measures to ensure that national institutions are informed effectively, including through diplomatic channels, about the activities of the Centre for Human Rights involving national institutions;

12. Takes note of the role of the Coordinating Committee created by national institutions, as recognized in Commission on Human Rights resolution 1994/54, in close cooperation with the Centre for Human Rights, to assist Governments and institutions, when requested, to follow up on relevant resolutions and recommendations concerning the strengthening of national institutions;

13. Requests the Secretary-General to continue to provide, from within existing resources, the necessary assistance for holding meetings of the Coordinating Committee during the sessions of the Commission on Human Rights, under the auspices of, and in cooperation with, the High Commissioner/Centre for Human Rights;

14. Also requests the Secretary-General to continue to provide, from within existing resources and the Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights, the necessary assistance for regional meetings of national institutions;

15. Takes note of the report of the Secretary-General concerning possible forms of participation by national institutions in United Nations meetings dealing with human rights (E/CN.4/1997/41), and notes the corresponding recommendation therein;

16. Considers it appropriate for national institutions which conform with the Principles relating to national institutions to be able to participate in an appropriate manner in their own right in meetings of the Commission on Human Rights and its subsidiary bodies, requests the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission as soon as possible a report containing options for arrangements to implement this so that the Commission can resolve this question at its fifty-fourth session, and considers that appropriate practices should be continued in the interim to provide for their participation;

17. Reiterates its request to the Secretary-General to convene, within existing resources, a fourth international workshop on national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights, to be held in Mexico during 1997;

18. Welcomes the decisions to hold the second Asia-Pacific regional workshop of national institutions, the second regional meeting of African national institutions and the third regional meeting of European national institutions within the next year;

19. Invites Governments and intergovernmental organizations to contribute to the Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights for the purpose of financing, where necessary, attendance by representatives of national institutions;

20. Recognizes the important and constructive role that non-governmental organizations can play, in cooperation with national institutions, for the better promotion and protection of human rights;

21. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the Commission at its fifty-fourth session on the implementation of the present resolution;

22. Decides to continue its consideration of this question at its fifty-fourth session.